

Bomb Training Center

A.P.O. - 525, % Postmaster, N.Y.C.

Sunday (Mother's day)

May 9, 1943

Hallo Joe,

Mind if I use a little of this air mail stationery I picked up while in Brazil? - I didn't particularly want air mail, but at this point of the game - one can't be too choosy - you take what you can find and like it!

Don't know when I'll finish this - or when you will get it. - Just thought I'd start it and from then on - things will have to take care of themselves. - Say, - while I'm thinking of it. I was paid on the first of the month, - so sometime soon you should be getting the \$25 allotment. - That should make two that you've gotten - one for my March + one for my April pay. I haven't figured out just what good a checking account does one over here. - So far none of us have been able to cash one - and so - I guess it's a damn good thing I haven't really had to have some money. - Money orders we send out are marked with the A.P.O. number - so that also squeals that little deal of letting you folks know my whereabouts, other than just North Africa! -

at present we are having our plane overhauled by mechanics the first time since we left the states - so we are free for a few days. - It's a real relief, too, - but it won't last long. - Pretty soon I guess will be throwing the coal to 'er! I see ^{by the} papers that Lusia is about thru. - I thought we would probably be around in the mopping up - but apparently they couldn't wait for us! - Oh well, - it doesn't make me mad, and anyhow - I'll probably have a seat reserved, a little too close for comfort, during the next round - so you won't catch me crying about this one! I've been fairly close to the action front and have seen some of the boys and what they work with. - Believe me, - they are in there pitching, and doing a real job of it, too.

You should be with us, - living in some of the places we have been living in, - each place gets progressively worse - so far as modern conveniences go. That's to be expected, but golly, - never did I think I could get to the point of looking at a "Chic Sale" and thinking of it in terms of an improvement over what I had! - These French go into the extremes. - I can't quite figure out their toilet arrangements. - There's just as much porcelain as we have - the same sort of plumbing - but no where to sit! - Guess it will go sorta hard on those accustomed to catching up on their reading there! -

Have you wondered where all the "Spani" market went, too? Well, - I won't tell you - but don't offer me any when I get home. We have regular jokes about it and today being Sunday - someone started the rumor that for dinner, today, we were to have Southern Fried Spankin - we didn't tho - a very tough piece of steak - but I should be telling you who can't even get any tough steak - that is legally!

There's a Red Cross station in town - the first one of any of the various organizations that I've encountered. From the job they're doing they can sure have my donations every year - and some more, too. - They have a big building in town - several in fact - for enlisted personnel - one for officers. - The officer's has a large reading room with a lending library, a game room with "ping pong" etc. - and last but by no means least - a large sandwich counter. - On the counter are the ingredients and you make your own up - Dagwood style if you like. - They usually have cheese, hot dogs (really over grown vienna sausages), peanut butter, butter, salmon, corned beef, & raisins; - to drink - coffee - grape fruit juice, and if you're lucky enough - ice cream for about 15 minutes (as long as it lasts!). You can pay 2 francs if you want to - if you don't - then don't - you're still free to eat. - Anyway you just drop the money in a box so no one other than yourself could possibly know whether or not you pay - course I usually don't! You can't imagine just

what this means - cause on the post, we get only our meals - no restaurants as back in the states, - and in the town itself - well, - we just aren't supposed to eat there - for 2 reasons, - 1. - it would be taking the food away from the natives (civilized people here) and 2. - the local food is most probably contaminated in lots of ways and the medics have warned all to beware. - For drinking, - off the post - no water is allowed. - no milk seen since I left Puerto Rico - & beer is recommended because the alcohol in it kills most everything else (!) - but even those who like beer - don't like this stuff: it seems it has no hops in it. - So that leaves us wine - and that - well - with no sugar - they sweeten it with sacarin - and to give it a kick - they add dope! - So now - can you see why the Red Cross is such a haven for us. -

Oh. - I forgot to mention the dances the R.C. has a couple of times a week - usually a service orchestra - about 15 red cross workers + nurses - and only 400 or so officers with their tongues hanging out! - Quite an undertaking to get near one of the girls - only need 1 bowie knife, - 1.45. caliber automatic, and a Thompson sub machine! - That's to get near - after you've achieved the impossible and get to touch one - you get cut in on by someone else who probably followed in your wake getting up to the girls. - Now don't tell me the moral is to be the one who follows - cause that doesn't work either -

This A.P.O. is about the best I can find out for the time being - I hope it gets me some mail - but I haven't much hope for after talking to fellows who've been at a permanent station - well, - their mail is awfully few & far between - so what hope can we on the move have? - Only thing is - it does follow you around and eventually catches you. Meanwhile - I guess I'll just keep on awritin' and letting people know I'm still perkin'!

Well, Joe. - I've writ out of this here stuff I'm allowed to say - (maybe I'm not allowed this much - I should see it our the

other end after the censor gets thru with it!-) We are supposed to censor our ~~own~~ mail - and then it's to be spot checked somewhere along the way. - but I can just see 'em opening our mail, too - Hi, Censor! -

Oh - I forgot to tell you about John Freeman - he is one of the gang of Joe & Paul whose ~~gang~~ thru Basic, Advanced & Avon Park with me. - We are the only two left together - and have our own good times! - Well, - his father is in the Navy - and stationed at one of those North African towns - He looked his Dad up - went walking right in on him (his father is a shore officer) and you should have seen his Dad's expression! - He had no idea John ~~was~~ had even left the states!

Well, - I'll really stop now - and get this mailed - I sure surprised myself by finishing this. -

Bye now -
Joe